

## COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

# Shelby County

Alabama · Columbiana · FIPS 01117 · Population 223,916 ·  
Crosodo Index #1254\*

STATE BASELINE	STATE TIER	ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)	CONFIDENCE	LAST VERIFIED
Ala. Code §22-20-5.1	Good	—	MEDIUM	2026-05-05

**IMPORTANT — NOT LEGAL ADVICE**

This report compiles publicly-available statutes, regulations, and county zoning rules into a research reference. It is **not legal advice** and is provided **without warranty** as to accuracy, completeness, or current applicability.

Cottage food law changes frequently. Counties may amend zoning, health departments may issue new permits, and state legislatures may update statutes after the publication date shown above.

**Always verify rules directly with your state department of health/agriculture and your county health and planning offices before relying on them for any business or regulatory decision.** Consult a licensed attorney for advice specific to your situation.

ALABAMA: SHELBY COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #1254\* · FIPS 01117 · Columbiana

# Shelby County

Population 223,916 · State baseline: Ala. Code §22-20-5.1 · **MEDIUM**

## QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

### HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Alabama state law (§22-20-5.1) permits home kitchen production of non-potentially hazardous foods. Producer must complete a state-approved food safety course before selling. No sales cap. Direct sales only (no wholesale). Application and approval required through local county health department. Shelby County Health Department reviews applications, requires proof of training, sample label, and product list.)

### SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

### PETS ALLOWED?

Standard food safety practices apply; no explicit state-level pet restriction in Alabama cottage food statute, but county health inspectors may require exclusion of pets from kitchen during production.

### HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional (Shelby County zoning governs home-based businesses for unincorporated areas. Individual municipalities (Hoover, Pelham, Helena, Alabaster, etc.) within Shelby County may require separate home occupation permits. Contact Shelby County Planning & Zoning or the relevant municipal zoning office. Shelby County is a large suburban county in the Birmingham metro area.)

### ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

### INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Conditional (County health department reviews application and may inspect before approving cottage food operations. Alabama does not require routine inspections post-approval, but county health has authority to investigate complaints.)

## Home kitchen rules

<b>HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED</b>	Yes — Alabama state law (§22-20-5.1) permits home kitchen production of non-potentially hazardous foods. Producer must complete a state-approved food safety course before selling. No sales cap. Direct sales only (no wholesale). Application and approval required through local county health department. Shelby County Health Department reviews applications, requires proof of training, sample label, and product list.
<b>SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN</b>	No
<b>PET RESTRICTIONS</b>	Standard food safety practices apply; no explicit state-level pet restriction in Alabama cottage food statute, but county health inspectors may require exclusion of pets from kitchen during production.
<b>WATER SUPPLY</b>	No specific private water testing requirement documented for Alabama cottage food operations at state level; county health may have additional requirements.
<b>HANDWASHING</b>	Standard handwashing required per state food safety training course requirements.
<b>FOOD STORAGE</b>	Non-TCS, non-perishable storage required. Products must be shelf-stable.

### Inspection & permitting

<b>INSPECTION REQUIRED</b>	Conditional — County health department reviews application and may inspect before approving cottage food operations. Alabama does not require routine inspections post-approval, but county health has authority to investigate complaints.
<b>HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT</b>	Conditional — Shelby County zoning governs home-based businesses for unincorporated areas. Individual municipalities (Hoover, Pelham, Helena, Alabaster, etc.) within Shelby County may require separate home occupation permits. Contact Shelby County Planning & Zoning or the relevant municipal zoning office. Shelby County is a large suburban county in the Birmingham metro area.
<b>LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE</b>	Varies

### Customer-facing rules

<b>ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP</b>	Yes
<b>ON-SITE SIGNAGE</b>	Conditional
<b>DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES</b>	Alabama cottage food law allows direct-to-consumer sales, including home pickup, online sales, and in-state shipping (as of 2021 amendment). No wholesale or retail store sales.
<b>MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME</b>	No explicit employee cap in Alabama cottage food statute; home occupation zoning may restrict non-resident employees.

### Relevant county code

Ala. Code §22-20-5.1; Shelby County zoning ordinance (contact Planning & Zoning)

#### RESEARCH NOTES

Alabama state baseline applies. Shelby County is a major suburb of Birmingham with high population and many municipalities. County health department approval required before selling, with proof of food safety training. The 2021 amendment (SB 160 / Act 2021-461) expanded the law significantly — removed sales cap, added online sales and shipping. Shelby County Health Department not listed in input URLs. No county-specific override found beyond state-required county health approval process. Applications and fees vary by county; Shelby County health department contact should be verified directly.

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#### SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.shelbyal.com>

<https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/foodsafety/cottage-food-law.html>

<https://www.shelbyal.com>

**Questions?** Join the Crosodo Forum to discuss your county’s specific zoning rules at <https://crosodo.com/nb/alabama/shelby-county-discuss>

## Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Shelby County	Jefferson County	St. Clair County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	Standard food safety practices apply; no explicit state-level pet restriction in Alabama cottage food statute, but county health inspectors...	Not specified; standard sanitation applies	No specific state restriction; county health approval may review kitchen conditions.
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Conditional	Upon-complaint	Upon-complaint
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Alabama cottage food law allows direct-to-consumer sales, including home pickup, online sales, and in-state shipping (as of 2021 amendment)...	Direct-to-consumer: home, farmers markets, events, online, in-state shipping (permitted since 2021 amendment). No wholesale. No out-of-stat...	Direct sales only. In-state online sales and shipping allowed. Home pickup, farmers markets, events permitted.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	Varies	Varies
RESTRICTIONS	Alabama state law (§22-20-5.1) permits home kitchen production of non-potentially hazardous foods. Producer must complete a state-approved ...	State baseline applies. Food handler certification (state-approved course, e.g., Learn2Serve ~\$7 or ACES course) required before selling. A...	Alabama cottage food law (§22-20-5.1, 2021 amendment): no sales cap, direct sales only. Must complete state-approved food safety course and...
FOOD STORAGE	Non-TCS, non-perishable storage required. Products must be shelf-stable.	Standard food storage; non-PHF only	Non-potentially hazardous shelf-stable foods only.
POPULATION	223,916	672,265	91,719

## State context — Alabama cottage food law

Shelby County's rules sit on top of Alabama's state cottage food framework. The state law sets the floor — counties can add but cannot remove protections.

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<b>STATUTE</b> Ala. Code §22-20-5.1	<b>ANNUAL SALES CAP</b> —
<b>REGISTRATION REQUIRED</b> Yes	<b>FOOD HANDLER CERT</b> Yes (specific course)
<b>KITCHEN INSPECTION</b> No	<b>DIRECT SALES ONLY</b> Yes
<b>INDIRECT SALES</b> No — Indirect sales to grocery stores, restaurants, or wholesale are not permitted; producers may use an agent for delivery but cannot sell through retailers.	

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For the full state-level analysis including the verbatim statute text, see the [Alabama cottage food law report](#).

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### STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <https://alison.legislature.state.al.us/code-of-alabama>

State dept cottage food page: <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/foodsafety/cottage-food-law.html>

Forrager.com: <https://forrager.com/law/alabama/>

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## Questions?

Join the Crosodo Forum to discuss Shelby County's specific zoning rules, permits, and what other home bakers are seeing locally.

<https://crosodo.com/nb/alabama/shelby-county-discuss>

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